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The impact of Brexit identities on voting intentions and workplace dynamics:

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Abstract

This paper looks to examine the strength of people's Brexit identities - firstly, by exploring how much influence an individual's Brexit identity has on their political party affiliations and secondly, how impactful people's Brexit views are in their place of work. With a sample size of 230, data was collected through a survey that was shared online via political forums. The findings show that in the upcoming 2019 election, Brexit identity will play a hugely important role in which political party people choose to support. Furthermore, as a result of contrasting Brexit views there will be a divide in the workplace that will negatively affect the working environment.

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Keywords: Brexit, Workplace Dynamics, Voting intentions, 2019 Election.

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1.0 Introduction:

On the 23rd of June 2016, the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union and it is still one of the most prevalent, talked about and divisive topics in society today. The consequences of Brexit are debated among many and there is no clear common ground on what the actual outcome of the UK leaving the EU will be (Begg, 2017; Dhingra, et al 2017; Sampson, 2017). One thing that is for certain, is the divide that has been created as a result of Brexit. Whatever the outcome, these political and social divides uncovered in the process to this day are far more damaging and long-lasting than any economic consequences to the UK (Cockburn, 2019). The subdivides arisen from Brexit have the potential to completely fracture the union of the UK, with Scotland and Northern Ireland feeling increasingly ostracised from the rest of the UK (Stephens, 2019). The gravity of people's contrasting Brexit views is shown by the mass pro and anti-Brexit rallies up and down the UK, the expulsion of politicians from their political parties and furthermore the defection of politicians between parties (BBC, 2019; The Independent, 2019; The Guardian, 2019a). The fact that, within the timeframe of undertaking this research study alone, the British government has negotiated a new deal with the EU for its departure from Europe, then subsequently rejected this deal in the British parliament and thus, finally declared a general election in December 2019 shows its relevancy as a topical issue in today's society.

The aims of this research study are to explore the impact of people's individual Brexit identities on their lives in two different ways. Firstly, how much influence an individual's Brexit identity will have on the political party they choose to support. Will they forsake their overarching political ideologies and loyalty to a particular party if it contrasts with their own views towards Brexit? Secondly, there will be an exploration into the impact that people's Brexit views have on their

workplace environment. The aim of which, is to see if the dividing opinions towards Brexit also exist in the workplace and if this in turn has an effect on job satisfaction, turnover intentions and discrimination. The layout of the paper is as follows: firstly, to explore the literature that exists in regard to topic, which will help discover themes that consistently come up and determine where further research is required. Secondly, the methodology section will discuss the research methods that were chosen for this study and look at the ethical considerations that this research will follow. The following section will present the findings from the research that was undertaken and then analyze these results to test the chosen hypotheses. The final section will conclude the paper, looking at the implications of the research and outlining the suggestions for future research.

2.0 Literature review:

This section will review the literature as follows; firstly, there will be a historical background into the most prominent political ideologies in the UK which will provide a contextual background for this paper. Secondly, people's loyalties to their political ideology will be examined and what circumstances in the past led to people voting against their ideological standpoints. Finally, the current literature in relation to how people's political views impacts them in the workplace will be explored, identifying where more research is needed in regard to people's Brexit identities.

2.1 Historical Overview of Political ideologies:

As one aspect of this study will look at people's political ideologies and if they would remain loyal to this or their Brexit identity, it is important to initially understand the main political ideologies in the UK. By undertaking a historical overview of the main political parties in the UK, it not only sets the perspective for this paper but also provides context into the views these parties have towards Europe. The most widely accepted and all-embracing term, defines political ideology as a coherent system of beliefs or views towards politics and their engagement in society (Siegler,

1976; Evans and Taylor 1984). Furthermore, it is made apparent that political ideology is not a fixed entity and that as a point of fact it can be developed and revised over time (Dommett, 2014). On a whole, the literature portrayed the UK to follow a two-party system between the Conservative and the Labour party, due to their dominance of the British political sphere so extensively throughout time (Norton, 1984, Lipson, 1953). However, as the literature made clear, Liberalism also had a very important part to play in the UK as their beliefs regarding freedom strongly influenced Conservatism's idea of a free market and after a period of complete insignificance their clear and well-defined plan towards Brexit was gaining them increasing popularity in the present day (The Economist, 2019; Shrimmsley, 2019).

Conservatism:

Conservatism is the most complex ideology when trying to determine what their main overarching ideologies are. Leach (1996) suggests that Conservatism does not have a clear system of beliefs and that they are highly adaptable to the situation they are in, but are consistent throughout their history to be on right-authoritarian side of the British political spectrum (Figure 1). Traditional British Conservatism had a strong emphasis on hierarchy and order, those within society were to be expected to know their place within it and accept their roles accordingly (Kirk, 1985; Graham and Oakeshott, 1976). Conservatism did however, evolve into new branches of thought, known as Thatcherism which illustrated a 'a full blown ideological matrix' (Fair and Hutcheson, 1987) with this shift now meaning the notion of a free market was at the forefront of their beliefs, promoting less regulations, privatization and individualism (BBC news, 2013; Lenormand, 2015). It was evident that throughout these ideological changes there was always an essence of skepticism towards Europe, with a strong emphasis on the UK's Anglican heritage (Rollings, 2009; Baker

and Seawright, 2000). This message is also perpetuated by the current Conservative government who are pro-Brexit at all costs, whether that be with or without a deal with the European Union.

Labourism:

On the centre-left hand side of the political spectrum (Figure 1), Labourism, as the name suggests has an ideology of standing up for working class people and was in fact founded on the back of various working-class organizations such as trade unions and trade councils (Lenormand, 2015). The core beliefs of Labourism also consist of increasing state-intervention and achieving social equity across the UK (Hobsbawm, 1974). A rebrand to 'New Labour' in the 1990's to a more centralist middle class party, did disenfranchise their traditional working-class voters (Evans, 2000) although the ideologies of the current leadership have reverted to a more left-wing approach, re-focusing and regaining the support of the working-class population (Bolton and Pitts, 2018). In terms of Labour's ideology towards Europe, they have in fact changed their approach over time, up to the 1980's, Labour was opposed to any membership with Europe, whom they viewed as a 'capitalist club' (Baker and Seawright, 2000). This attitude softened however, when the EU added a more social approach to their policies with the aim of improving workers' rights and formally observing trade unions, swaying Labour's view on the issue to now seeing Europe as an ally against Conservatism (Baker and Seawright, 2000). The current views of the Labour party are pro-European but they have a somewhat inconclusive and divided vision towards Brexit (Jones, 2019), with the official message being that they would negotiate a new deal with the EU and then let the people vote on whether to accept the deal or remain in the EU.

Liberalism:

On the center of the British political compass (Figure 1), Liberalism is often associated with having an 'unclear identity' with policies that are often confusing and contradictory (Finding, 2011). The

Liberalist party in the UK was often divided between two schools of thought; Classical Liberalism and new Liberalism. Classical Liberalism was similar to Thatcherism as it had an emphasis on the individual and their rights to liberty achieved through a free and open economy (Russel and Fieldhouse, 2005). On the other hand, the ideals of new Liberalism were open to state intervention to more efficiently use resources, disregarding their historic ideologies of self-help and free markets (Brack, 2012). This ambiguity and failure to fully embrace the ideals of one of these two ideologies was ultimately why the Liberal party was constantly trailing the Conservatives and Labour party (Brack, 2012). This led to the Liberal party being dissolved in 1988, culminating with the formation of the Liberal Democrat party whose beliefs were more comparable with that of old Liberalism, focusing on social equality where individuals were 'free from a controlling, intrusive state and a stifling conformity' (Pack, 2013). In relation to Europe, the Liberal Democrats are the most outspoken anti Brexit party in the UK, with the clear message of wanting to revoke Brexit (Foster, 2019) and this image as the one true remain party is gaining them vast popularity among voters (Shrimpsley, 2019).

To summarize, the current political situation in the UK, followers of the Conservative party are on a whole supportive of Brexit with divisions however over the manner in which the UK should leave the EU. Those who are in favor of a hard Brexit are turning their support to extremist parties most notably the Brexit party, as they feel let down by the deal the Conservative government agreed with the EU. The majority of Labour supporters want to remain in the EU, as does the Labour party itself, but their Brexit plan is somewhat ambiguous in what and how it wants to remain in the EU causing some concern among voters. As stated previously, the Liberal Democrats however are gaining significant support due to their clear plan of revoking Brexit and likewise

other parties who are also distinct on the issue of remaining such as the Scottish Nationalists and Plaid Cymru.

2.2 Loyalty to political ideology:

As mentioned briefly, a change in a party's political ideology could in turn result in people changing their allegiances between parties. For example, the birth of 'New Labour' in the late 1990's looked to distance the party from Old Labour's socialist brand and openly embraced Capitalism, losing the support of their traditional working-class voters (Singleton, 2013). Another example is seen when the ideals of New Liberalism called for more state intervention in the market, compelling their traditional voters to the vote in favor of the Conservative party (Brack, 2012).

Beyond this however, it is also vital to see which other circumstances in the past have caused supporters to switch between parties, for reasons other than the evolving ideologies of political parties. An example of this found in the literature was regarding climate change in the early 2000's, when the Labour party was dominating the British political climate. Maclean (2008), found that when Labour introduced a sudden rise in petrol and diesel costs, this was met with significant backlash and led to the Conservative party taking over the lead in the polls in the following months. Another report, also found that despite people being supportive towards Labour's proactive environmental policies, when it directly affected them through taxation for example, it resulted in distrust and people beginning to question their support for the Labour party (Dresner et. Al, 2006). A further illustration of this discovered in the literature was regarding the Iraq war in 2003. The Labour government in power at the time made the choice to enter the Iraq war and what followed was their lowest level of support in over 15 years, as people diverged towards the Liberal Democrat and Conservative party (Smith, 2003). Likewise, to the example of climate change, this shift in voter allegiance arose from a conflict with the government's course of action and not due an

alteration in political ideology from the party. This shows the short-termism outlook of voters and despite Brexit having long term ramifications it is useful in showing that people will overlook their over-arching political ideologies if they disagree with their party on a particular issue.

2.2 Impact of Brexit on party loyalty:

Looking at the unfolding of events in the house of commons over the past couple of years, it is a very useful frame of reference into the effects of Brexit on party loyalty. There have been a number of high-profile defections, with seven defectors from the Conservatives and Labour party joining the Liberal democrats in what is described as the ‘short-term chaos of Brexit’ (Henry, 2019). Furthermore, twenty-one Conservative members of parliament were expelled from the party, as they voted against Boris Johnson in order to prevent a no-deal Brexit occurring (Payne, 2019). Other important conservative figures also quit on their own accord, including the Prime minister’s Brother who cited ‘national interests’ as more important than loyalty (The Guardian, 2019b). These resignations and defections from members of parliament emphasize the high degree of divisions over Brexit, with the schisms expected to rival any of which the UK has seen in the past (Ferguson, 2017). It is clear that politicians are strongly influenced by their Brexit identity, with some favoring it over their political loyalties but an area that is considerably less examined in current research is the general population’s behavior into this same regard. A King’s college London funded report did find however, that only one in sixteen people did not have a Brexit identity whilst more than one in five people did not have a political party identity (Menon, 2019). While this does show that people have a stronger identity to either being a Remain or Leave voter then they have for their identity towards a certain political party, it does not show if their Brexit identity would actually have an influence on who they would support in an election. Dubbed the ‘Brexit election’ by Sky news (2019) due to the fact the election was called as a result of parliament not being able to come

to any resolution over Brexit, it was still unclear if people would actually vote according to their Brexit identity or political allegiances. It is clear that people have a strong identity towards Brexit, but what this study wants to find out is if this identity is actually strong enough to overcome their loyalties to political parties and influence who they vote for. With this in mind, to test this notion the following **research questions and hypotheses** were developed:

1) Will the most important factor when deciding who to vote for in 2019 election, be aligning with a party because of their Brexit policy?

- **H1:** There will be a difference between the election of 2017 and that of 2019 in which is more influenced by people's Brexit identity.

2) Which Brexit viewpoint (Remain/leave) will be most influenced by their Brexit identity when deciding who to vote for?

- **H2:** A person's Brexit identity is not independent of which factor they deem the most important when choosing who to vote for in the 2019 election.

3) Will people who are un-loyal to their political ideology be more aligned to their Brexit identity in the 2019 election?

- **H3:** A person's loyalty to their political ideology will not be independent of which factor they deem the most important when choosing who to vote for in the 2019 election.

2.3 Impact of Brexit views in the workplace:

There is no doubt that Brexit will have vast implications on the laws in the workplace, with changes to workers' rights and regulations and there is an extensive literature on how companies can prepare for the impact of these regulatory changes (CIPD, 2018; Blake and Moschieri, 2018; Pickard, 2019) Beyond this however, is important to understand how dividing views over Brexit

will affect the culture and environment in workplaces, which is more limited in terms literature. In a broader sense to society as a whole, the UK is reaching a crisis point over how profoundly divided the country has become with their views towards Brexit (Lord, 2018). Post-referendum Britain has seen racial tensions increase significantly, especially the harassment of EU-migrant workers in the UK (Addleshaw and Goddard, 2016). These divisions are permeating into the workplace, so understanding which ways it is affecting organisational culture is a vital first step in preventing the negative consequences that arise from it. A Price Waterhouse Coopers' report in 2016, highlighted how their clients were preparing for incidents of 'bullying' over Brexit', but this did not outline how and to what extent the bullying occurred to. Looking over the pond to understand how political changes can affect employees, a study into casual discrimination in an American workplace found that an individual's political views did in fact result in discrimination against them in various ways (AirTasker, 2019). One example found in the study was that avid Trump supporters had a 28% higher chance of jokes being made about them and a 23% chance of them being treated over critically by superiors. Looking at the importance of political alignments in the workplace, Ranstad (2018) found in a survey that 35% of employees would leave their jobs if they had significantly different political views to that of their manager and 58% of respondents would not even attend an interview at an organisation that had political beliefs conflicting with their own. This notion was further supported by Bonica (2014), who looked at the political ideological alignment of industries in the US, and was surprised by how extreme the political lean in certain occupations was. The research found that left-leaning employees would tend to work for an organisation aligned with their views and vice-versa for right-leaning employees, with political ideology outweighing geographic or economic aspects, showing that in general terms political views played a huge role in where people chose to work. Kropp (2019) analysed historical data

and found that in times of political disruption to business, employees tend to become less engaged and their behaviour also becomes more unpredictable and toxic, which can certainly be related to Brexit as there is no doubt it will have some sort of disruption to businesses in the UK. One issue regarding people's Brexit identities are that they are not necessarily protected from the UK's discrimination laws, so in fact could result in unfavourable consequences for that individual or the company (Fox, 2019). As it is not necessarily covered by the law it becomes more of a company level issue, further emphasising the importance of being able to understand the ways in which people's Brexit views will impact the culture in the workplace. It is clear that political views have an impact on the environment in the workplace and in light of this, the following research questions and hypotheses were designed for this study:

4) Will people's views towards Brexit cause more interpersonal conflict in the workplace than their views towards other political topics?

- **H4:** Interpersonal conflict in the workplace arising from the topic of Brexit is higher than the interpersonal conflict that arises from the other major political topics; Environment, Healthcare, Economy and Crime.

5) Will those in favor of Brexit (Leave supporters) face more unfavorable conditions in their place of work than those in favor of remaining in the European Union.

- **H5:** there is a difference between the Brexit viewpoints (Remain and Leave) in which will face higher levels of; Higher levels of discrimination, higher turnover intentions and lower levels of job satisfaction.

3.0 Methodology:

There are studies looking at the causes of why people defer between political parties

and how the political views of employees affect the workplace dynamics (Addleshaw and Goddard, 2016; Brack, 2012; Dresner et. Al, 2006; Lord, 2018) however, both of these are under-researched into the specific impact of people's Brexit identities. Brexit is distinct from regular political topics as it is such a new, on-going and far-reaching concept that is going to completely change the long-term future of the UK. The present study, examines to what extent an individual's Brexit identity will influence who they vote for in the 2019 general election compared to the 2017 election and if it overrides their long-lasting political ideologies and loyalty to a party. Furthermore, this study will examine how an individual's Brexit identity will impact their workplace environment, comparing this to other political topics that also exist in the workplace. To address these questions, a quantitative approach was undertaken to gather and interpret the data, using online surveys as the data collection tool. The survey was distributed to various political communities on the internet to achieve a widespread and diverse group of respondents.

3.1 Participants

The aim of the survey was to gather a sample that was best representative of the whole population of the UK's electors. In order to achieve this, the survey was shared online through UK political forums, found via Reddit discussion pages and Facebook groups with the only limitation to participation being eligibility to vote in the UK. The forums chosen to share the survey were not communities built around a specific political party or ideology but rather general UK political pages in order to avoid bias in the results. The sample size is 230, 96 of which were male, 85 female and 2 other (Full demographics in figure 2) with the mean age being 34.34 (sd=12.80). Furthermore, the breakdown of the sample's Brexit identities is as follows; 91 want to leave the EU and 111 want to remain in the EU (shown in figure 3).

3.2 Measures

I. Impact of Brexit identity on 2019 Election:

To measure this, a set of questions were created specifically for this study. Firstly, participants were asked to identify their political ideology and assess how loyal they were to this by answering questions on their voting behavior. Once a person's loyalty had been identified it would further indicate how strong people's Brexit identities are, for example someone who had always remained extremely loyal to their political ideology but were now in fact choosing their Brexit identity to be more important. Participants were then asked to rank five factors in order of importance (Shown in figure 4) for why they would vote for a political party in both the 2017 and 2019 election. The five factors were as follows; i) Alignment with your overarching political ideologies, ii) The leadership of the party, iii) Alignment with your views towards Brexit iv) Loathing of alternative parties and v) Loyalty to a political party. This would identify what people placed more importance on when choosing a political party, and how influential their Brexit identities would be on this choice. A limitation arisen from this study however, is that the 2019 general election is still to happen, so it is comparing people's actual voting behavior in 2017 to their voting intentions in 2019, with the latter being considerably less reliable (LSE, 2019).

II. Workplace measures:

To measure the impact of people's political views in the workplace, previously designed scales were used. Firstly, a YouGov (2019) top issues tracker identified the five most important political issues in the UK (Brexit, Environment, Economy, Crime and Healthcare) and these were used as the benchmark for comparing the impact of people's political views in the workplace. The

following measurement scales (adapted to some extent by including political topics into their design) were used to assess the impact of people's Brexit identity in the workplace:

- I. **Job performance:** was measured using Williams and Anderson's (1991) seven-item scale looking at how adequately tasks and job requirements can be met, with scores ranging from **1 (Completely disagree) to 5 (Completely agree)**. Sample item: "7". Cronbach's alpha = .793.
- II. **Conflict in the workplace:** was measured using the Interpersonal Conflict at Work Scale (ICAWS) developed from Spector and Jex's (1998) 4-item scale measuring how often people experienced disagreements or were treated badly ranging from **1 (never) to 5 (all the time)**. Sample item: "4". Cronbach's alpha = .886
- III. **Discrimination:** was measured using an adaptation of the Chronic Work Discrimination and Harassment study (Sternthal, Slopen and Williams, 2011) looking at how often **(1=Once a week or more, 2= A few times a month, 3=A few times a year, 4=Less than once a year and 5= Never)** three items of discrimination occurred in the workplace. Sample item: "3". Cronbach's alpha = .883
- IV. **Job Satisfaction:** was measured using the General Job Satisfaction Scale (Hackman & Oldham, 1975) with 5-items ranging on a scale of **1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)**. Sample item: "5". Cronbach's alpha = .81.
- V. **Turnover:** was measured using an adaptation of the Intent to Turnover scale (Cammann et al., 1983) which presented three statements and asked participants how strongly they agreed with them on a scale of **1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)**. Sample item: "3". Cronbach's alpha = .612.

*Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) suggested an alpha value greater than .70 is appropriate to determine the internal consistency reliability of an instrument.

3.3 Research design:

Online surveys were chosen as the collection method for this study as they are very effective at targeting larger groups of people with minimal time and cost (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The surveys involved close-ended questions, which often result in a higher response rates than questions involving a lot of typing and also means the data can be statistically analyzed more easily (Ponto, 2015). The surveys were also conducted so that the participants would remain anonymous, maximizing the responses being answered freely and also preventing the effects of social desirability bias (Sheperis, 2019). Interviews were considered as they could perhaps gather more in-depth responses but the time constraints and lack of generalizability to the larger population meant they were not as appropriate as online surveys for this study (Bryman and Bell, 2015). As shown in the preceding section, the survey's design is made of up of previously designed scales as well as also using new measurement techniques. According to Pandey (2015) a good research design has the following characteristics; objectivity, reliability, validity, generalizability and adequate information. As the previously designed scales have been extensively tested and feature prominently in human resources literature, they can be categorized as meeting the conditions of Pandey's (2015) 'good research design'. To ensure a good research design was achieved for the new set of measures the following conditions were met. The close-ended nature of the questions ensured the final scoring of each participant could be objectively observed and as stated could be analyzed more efficiently (Lavrakas 2008). Close ended questions can result in researcher bias and so to limit this, the option of 'other' was given in multiple choice questions where it was appropriate and the Likert-scale questions provided a wide range of options to cover all responses (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The questions were also pre-tested to a small target audience ensuring that the adequate information was being gathered and also to minimize any

measurement errors that may have been present, improving the validity and reliability of the research design (Boateng, et al. 2018).

3.4 Procedures:

The survey was designed following a review of the literature via a website called ‘qualtrics’ and was continuously pre-tested to ensure it made sense logically, answered the hypotheses of this study and was easy enough to understand. The surveys were shared in online political forums which have been known for high quality responses due to the asynchronous interactions which allow time for people to process and respond to the topics in a meaningful way (Im, and & Chee, 2006). The results were collected over a two-week period with a relatively high response rate that could perhaps have been improved by shortening the survey (30 people started but did not finish). Following on from this, the data was downloaded to SPSS and analyzed statistically which will be discussed in the following section. To ensure the study was conducted ethically, participants were provided a cover letter explaining the study’s purpose, background, and procedures (Figure 5) and their consent was asked prior to the survey commencing. Furthermore, despite asking for the participants demographics they would remain completely anonymous and throughout the whole process the research was delivered honestly and consistently with the message that was set, to ensure the ethical considerations were undertaken correctly.

4.0 Results:

4.1 Data analysis:

The data received from the surveys was analyzed using various statistical methods to determine if there was enough evidence to support the hypotheses. The statistical tests and the respective hypotheses are as follows:

1. Paired sample T-test: This test is used when comparing two means of the same measurement scale but from two different time periods (Kent State University, 2019) and was therefore used to test the first hypothesis:

- **H1:** There will be a difference between the election of 2017 and that of 2019 in which is more influenced by people's Brexit identity.

2. Chi-Square tests: Chi-squared tests are commonly used to assess relationships between categorical variables with the hypothesis being that these variables are not independent of one another (Bryman and Bell, 2015). With this in mind, chi-square tests were used to test the following hypotheses:

- **H2:** A person's Brexit identity is not independent of which factor they deem the most important when choosing who to vote for in the 2019 election.
- **H3:** A person's loyalty to their political ideology will not be independent of which factor they deem the most important when choosing who to vote for in the 2019 election.

3. Anova: This analysis compares the means between groups and determines whether or not there is a difference between these means, which make it a useful test for the last two hypotheses:

- **H4:** Interpersonal conflict in the workplace arising from the topic of Brexit is higher than the interpersonal conflict that arises from the other major political topics; Environment, Healthcare, Economy and Crime.
- **H5:** there is a difference between the Brexit viewpoints (Remain and leave) in which will face higher levels of; Higher levels of discrimination, higher turnover intentions and lower levels of job satisfaction.

4.2 Statistical tests:

To test the **H1** a paired T sample was used to compare the 2017 ranking and 2019 ranking of the most important factors when choosing a political party to support. As stated in the methodology, both of these time periods were measured using a rank scale of five factors in order of most to least important (Figure 6 and 7 show the results for 2017 and 2019 respectively). The findings showed that ‘Alignment with your views towards Brexit’ was considerably less important in 2017 ($m=2.94$, $sd=1.43$) than in 2019 ($m=1.97$, $sd=1.23$) where it was found to be the most important factor. For 2017, the most important factor was ‘Alignment with your overarching political ideologies’ ($m=1.73$, $sd=1.02$) whereas in 2019 this was considered to be of less importance ($m=2.48$, $sd=1.32$), showing that in 2017 people were still more tied to their political beliefs than their Brexit identity. The differences between the scores regarding ‘Alignment with your views towards Brexit’ in 2017 and 2019 was significant ($t_{184} = 7.81$, $p < 0.05$) and therefore H1 is supported that in 2019 people will be more influenced by their Brexit identity.

H2 was tested using a chi-squared test to examine how much being influenced by Brexit identity when deciding who to vote for differs across supporters of different Brexit identities. The participants were asked to select their current views towards Brexit and this was cross examined with the rank order for 2019. The analysis revealed that those who “wanted to leave the EU with no deal” rated alignment to Brexit views as most important ($n=32$ out of 49, 65.3%) followed by this, was those who wanted to ‘remain by MPs revoking Article 50’ ($n=19$ out of 35 or 54.28%). However, the relationship between variables was not significant (chi square = 9.20, $p = >0.05$) and thus, H2 is not supported.

H3 was also tested using a chi-squared test, to examine how alignment to Brexit views being the most important factor when choosing a party differs among the varying groups of political loyalty. The analysis revealed that those who had changed party only once were the most likely to choose a party because of alignment with their Brexit views (n=46 out of 74 or 62.12%). The most loyal voters who had only ever voted for one party followed on from this (n=34 out of 69 or 49.27%). The most un-loyal voters who had frequently changed party (+5 times) were the least likely choose a party because of alignment with their Brexit views (n=1 out of 6 or 16.67%), showing a rather inconclusive pattern in the cross-tabulations (Full results of political loyalty shown in figure 8). Furthermore, as the chi square test results were insignificant (chi square = 12.79, $p > 0.05$) it is inconclusive to say there is a relationship between loyalty and alignment to Brexit views being the most important factor and thus, H3 is not supported.

H4 was tested using a repeated measures Anova test to examine which political topic caused the most interpersonal conflict in the workplace. This test is designed for related, not independent groups and in this case the related variables were; Conflict arising from Brexit, Conflict arising from Healthcare, Conflict arising from Economy, Conflict arising from Crime and Conflict arising from Environment. The analysis (Shown in figure 9) revealed that Brexit (m=3.10, sd=1.49), caused significantly more conflict than the other variables, following on from this was healthcare (m=2.20, sd=1.03) with the lowest scoring topic being crime (m=2.09, sd=1.03). The results from this test are significant (F-statistic=1017.01, $P < 0.05$) so it can be said that conflict arising from Brexit is the highest out of all the political topics and thus, H4 is supported.

H5 was tested using a one-way Anova test to examine if there were any differences between the different Brexit identities and the conditions they faced in their place of work. The dependent variables were; Job satisfaction, Discrimination and Turnover intentions - which were measured using existing frameworks as previously shown in the methodology section with the independent variable being Brexit identity. The analysis (shown in figure 10), revealed that no-deal Brexit supporters experienced the most unfavorable conditions in their workplace; receiving the most discrimination ($m=2.88$, $sd=1.59$), the lowest levels of job satisfaction ($m=2.83$ $sd=0.48$) and had the most intent to leave their current job ($m=3.40$, $sd=0.85$). On the other hand, Remain voters who wanted to Revoke article 50, experienced the lowest amount of discrimination ($m=2.53$, $sd=1.59$), had the highest levels of job satisfaction ($m=3.11$, $sd=0.63$) and were the least likely to want to leave their current job ($m=2.36$, $sd=0.87$). There was a significant difference between the Brexit identities for Turnover Intentions (F-statistic=8.99, $P < 0.05$) so H5 can be supported for this variable. However, for Job satisfaction (F-statistic=2.44, $P > 0.05$) and Discrimination (F-statistic=0.55, $P > 0.05$) there is no significant difference between the varying Brexit identities and thus H5 is not supported for these two variables.

*A full table of the hypothesis and their significance is found in Figure 11.

4.0 Discussion:

4.1 Summary

To summarize the findings from this study, it was shown that the 2019 election would be heavily influenced by people's Brexit identity, as the majority of people would choose a party because of its policies towards Brexit. In the 2017 election however, Brexit identity was significantly less influential and voters placed a higher regard on their overarching political beliefs as the most

prominent factor for choosing a party. As is the case in overall society, the divisions that are emerging from Brexit are also prevalent in the workplace, with conflict arising from Brexit being considerably higher than conflicts that arise from other major political talking points. Furthermore, it was found that those who were in favor of leaving the EU were more likely to be discriminated against in the workplace, have lower levels of job satisfaction and were more likely to leave their jobs than those who wanted to remain in the EU.

4.2 Implications

The literature stated that people in the UK had very strong Brexit identities, more so than an identity towards a political party and claimed that the upcoming election would be a 'Brexit election' (Menon, 2019; Sky News, 2019). These findings reaffirm this and take it one step further by showing that people would in fact act upon these beliefs and actually vote for a party based on its Brexit views. With this in mind, one implication from these findings is that it shows the importance of political parties having Brexit at the forefront of their campaign message in the upcoming election. Brexit identity is going to play a very important role in the election and the findings suggest that people would be willing to overlook their political beliefs and ideologies in order to vote for a government that will fulfil their desired outcome for Brexit. The contextual review of the literature showed the political alignments of the UK's major parties, and in conjunction with the results from this study, it would indicate that these parties should take a more centrist ideological stance (i.e Labour be more focused on center-left than far-left) whilst taking a strong and clear stance on Brexit. This centrist approach would allow parties to attract voters from opposing parties who have doubts about their Brexit identities or are more concerned about Brexit than their political ideology. A further implication from the findings is the problems that organizations may face from employee turnover and demotivated staff as a consequence of Brexit

related incidents in the workplace. Fox (2019) already analysed the complexities of political beliefs in the workplace and how they are not necessarily covered by the UK's discrimination laws, causing problems for employees and employers. Studies like this one itself, identify the divisions in the workplace and which factions, in this case Leave supporters, face more unfavourable working conditions. Understanding this is extremely important to prevent divisions in the workplace and ensure all employee's feel comfortable and are performing to their best. Furthermore, it adds to the literature such as Fox (2019) highlighting the complexities of political beliefs in the workplace and perhaps emphasises to law-makers that their needs to be a change in order to better protect employee's in the workplace when it comes to political beliefs.

4.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The main limitation from this study is that it takes into consideration voting intentions in the 2019 election compared to the actual vote of that in 2017. Voting intentions as stated are not as reliable and people may not actually vote in the way they intended to when it comes to the election (LSE, 2019). In future research, this study could be undertaken following on from the 2019 election so that people's actual voting behavior can be used to make the comparison with the 2017 election. A further limitation arose when testing **H3**, this involved analyzing voter loyalty which was measured in a very liberal way. One issue arising from the selected measurement of voter loyalty for this study is the effects of social desirability bias, which is where people respond to a question in a way that will be viewed more favorably by others (Sheperis, 2019). Thus, meaning participants may over-report their loyalty to their political ideology to not be thought of as a disloyal person. As it is also a very complex variable to measure, within the time constraints of this study it was not considered feasible to do so in more detail. To measure loyalty more adequately, it would be

improved by having participants respond to the same set of questions multiple times over an extended time period to fully understand their voting behavior.

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Appendix:

Figure 1

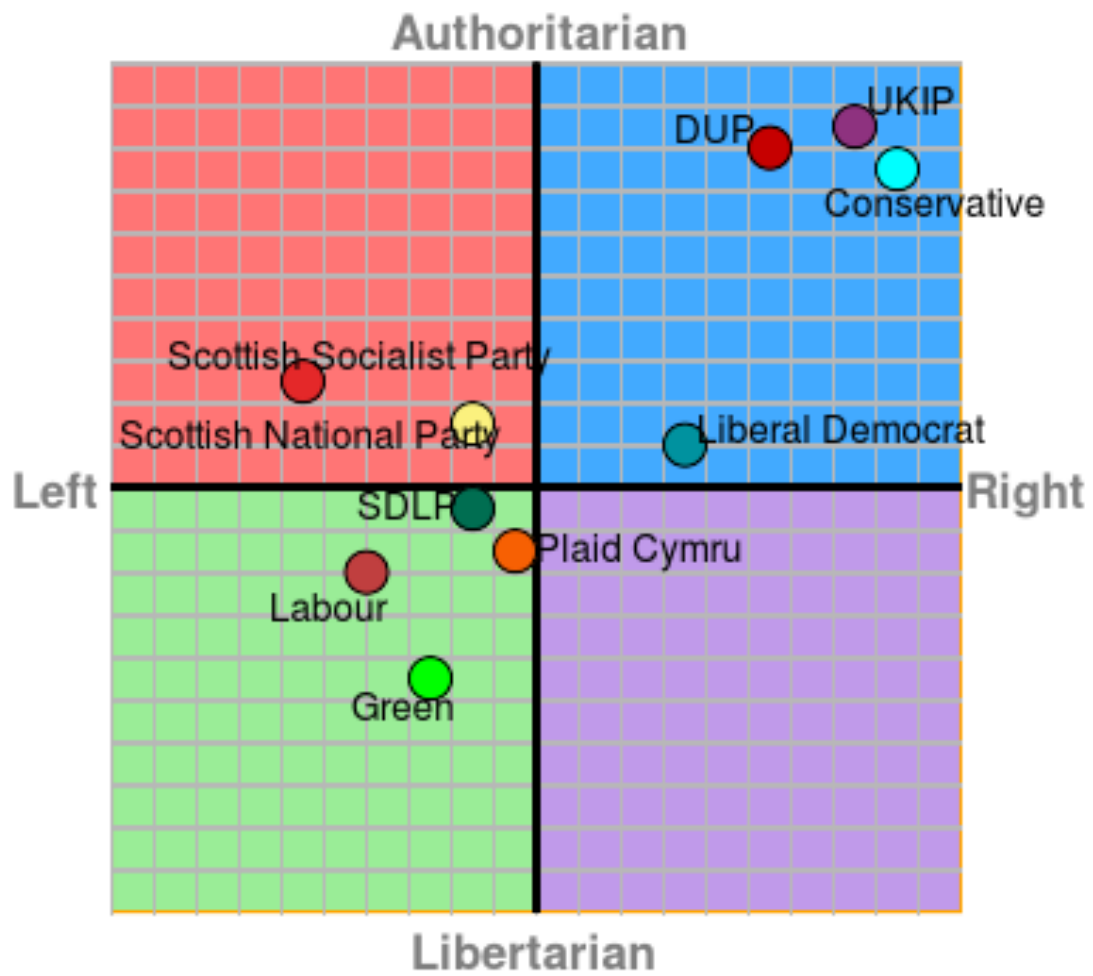


Figure 2

Demographics	n	%
Gender		
Female	85	46.44
Male	96	52.45
Other	2	1.09
Age		
18-25	55	30.05
26-39	72	39.39
40-59	48	26.22
60+	8	4.37
Education Level		
Low	21	11.73
Medium	36	20.11
High	94	52.51
Technical	27	15.08
Voting Region		
London	23	12.99
South of England	26	14.68
East of England	9	5.08
Midlands	28	15.81
Yorkshire	24	13.55
North of England	23	12.99
Scotland	20	11.29
Wales	13	7.34
Northern Ireland	11	6.21
Residence		
UK	144	84.21
EU (Other than UK)	20	11.69
Outside EU	7	4.09

Figure 3

#	Field	Choice Count
1	2nd referendum	37.62% 76
2	Remain - MPs revoke article 50	17.33% 35
3	Leave - no deal	24.26% 49
4	Leave - with deal	20.79% 42
		202

Figure 4

For the upcoming general election in December 2019, rank these in importance for who you would vote for:

Alignment with your views towards Brexit

Alignment with your overarching political ideologies

The leadership of the party

Loathing of alternative parties

Loyalty to party

Figure 5

Informed Consent Form – Online

Master thesis research study

Rory Markham, Nova SBE

Purpose of Research Study: The purpose of conducting this research study is to understand the relationship between People's Brexit identity and who they intend to vote for in the upcoming general election. Furthermore, to understand how people's Brexit identities will impact the culture and environment in their workplace. I am carrying out this research as part of my Master's in management thesis, advised by Prof Samantha Sim at Nova SBE.

Study Procedures and Duration: To participate in the study, you must be eligible to vote in the United Kingdom. For this study, you will answer questions on your political ideologies, Brexit identity and various workplace scenarios where your political views have impacted your workplace setting as well as some demographic questions. This survey typically takes around 5 minutes to complete. Please only begin the survey if you are able to do it without distraction and without interruption! Complete the survey only once!

Benefits of Study: Your participation in this study is voluntary, your refusal to participate or your withdrawal from this study will involve no penalty and you may discontinue participation at any time.

PLEASE NOTE:

It would really help us if you would complete the survey by giving your fullest attention, reading all instructions and statements carefully and then responding accordingly to all the items. This helps us get an accurate picture of your experience.

Possible Risks of Study: There are no anticipated risks or adverse effects in this study beyond what one would typically experience in daily life.

Confidentiality and Privacy of Research Data: The information provided by all respondents will be anonymous and confidential and will be used for research and assignment completion purposes only. The survey responses contain no identifying information. Also, no one will have access to your completed survey except for the research team and professors mentioned. As such, please answer all questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

Please select "I consent" and click ">>" to begin.

If you do not wish to participate in the survey, you may close the browser now to exit.

☐ I consent

Figure 6

#	Field	1		2		3		4		5		Total
1	Alignment with your views towards Brexit	23.76%	48	15.84%	32	22.28%	45	19.80%	40	18.32%	37	202
2	Alignment with your overarching political ideologies	56.93%	115	22.77%	46	12.38%	25	5.94%	12	1.98%	4	202
3	The leadership of the party	3.96%	8	30.69%	62	35.64%	72	21.29%	43	8.42%	17	202
4	Loathing of alternative parties	4.46%	9	8.91%	18	17.82%	36	39.11%	79	29.70%	60	202
5	Loyalty to party	10.89%	22	21.78%	44	11.88%	24	13.86%	28	41.58%	84	202

Figure 7

#	Field	1		2		3		4		5		Total
1	Alignment with your views towards Brexit	53.96%	109	16.83%	34	14.85%	30	7.43%	15	6.93%	14	202
2	Alignment with your overarching political ideologies	32.18%	65	22.28%	45	16.83%	34	21.78%	44	6.93%	14	202
3	The leadership of the party	2.48%	5	39.11%	79	32.67%	66	21.78%	44	3.96%	8	202
4	Loathing of alternative parties	4.46%	9	14.85%	30	28.71%	58	35.15%	71	16.83%	34	202
5	Loyalty to party	6.93%	14	6.93%	14	6.93%	14	13.86%	28	65.35%	132	202

Figure 8

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Only ever voted for one party	33.81% 71
2	Changed party once	36.19% 76
3	Changed party more than once (2-5 times)	27.14% 57
4	Frequently changed party (5+ times)	2.86% 6
		210

Figure 9

Descriptive Statistics				
What are your current views towards Brexit?		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
CONF_ENV	Total	2.3822	1.13465	167
CONF_HLT	Total	2.2056	1.03990	167
CONF_BRX	Total	3.1093	1.49309	167
CONF_CRI	Total	2.0988	1.03404	167
CONF_ECN	Total	2.2196	1.11110	167

Figure 10

Descriptives									
		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
'Turnover Intention'	2nd referendum	63	2.7566	.91621	.11543	2.5259	2.9874	1.00	4.67
	Remain – MPs revoke article 50	28	2.3690	.87648	.16564	2.0292	2.7089	1.00	3.67
	Leave – no deal	45	3.4000	.85753	.12783	3.1424	3.6576	1.67	5.00
	Leave – with deal	32	2.7604	.83488	.14759	2.4594	3.0614	1.00	4.67
	Total	168	2.8651	.94015	.07253	2.7219	3.0083	1.00	5.00
'Job Satisfaction'	2nd referendum	62	3.0677	.57139	.07257	2.9226	3.2128	1.00	4.80
	Remain – MPs revoke article 50	28	3.1107	.63324	.11967	2.8652	3.3563	1.00	4.20
	Leave – no deal	45	2.8322	.48138	.07176	2.6876	2.9768	1.40	3.80
	Leave – with deal	32	2.8797	.53277	.09418	2.6876	3.0718	1.00	4.60
	Total	167	2.9754	.55966	.04331	2.8899	3.0610	1.00	4.80
DISC_BRX	2nd referendum	63	2.5714	1.53271	.19310	2.1854	2.9574	1.00	5.00
	Remain – MPs revoke article 50	28	2.5357	1.59562	.30154	1.9170	3.1544	1.00	5.00
	Leave – no deal	45	2.8889	1.59861	.23831	2.4086	3.3692	1.00	5.00
	Leave – with deal	32	2.8490	1.57453	.27834	2.2813	3.4166	1.00	5.00
	Total	168	2.7034	1.56267	.12056	2.4654	2.9414	1.00	5.00

Figure 11

Hypothesis:	Significance:
H1: There will be a difference between the election of 2017 and that of 2019 in which is more influenced by people's Brexit identity.	Significant –Hypothesis 1 is supported.
H2: A person's Brexit identity is not independent of which factor they deem the most important when choosing who to vote for in the 2019 election.	Not significant – Hypothesis 2 is not supported.
H3: A person's loyalty to their political ideology will not be independent of which factor they deem the most important when choosing who to vote for in the 2019 election.	Not significant – Hypothesis 3 is not supported.
H4: Interpersonal conflict in the workplace arising from the topic of Brexit is higher than the interpersonal conflict that arises from the other major political topics; Environment, Healthcare, Economy and Crime.	Significant – hypothesis 4 is supported.
H5: There is a difference between the Brexit viewpoints in which will face higher levels of; Higher levels of discrimination, higher turnover intentions, lower levels of job satisfaction.	Significant for turnover intentions so hypothesis 5 is supported - whilst not significant for discrimination and job satisfaction hypothesis 5 is not supported for these 2 variables.